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## **ICC ANNOUNCES ILLINOIS COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY FUND GRANTS TOTALING \$1.4 MILLION**

The Illinois Commerce Commission announced today that 40 community organizations will receive nearly \$1.4 million in grants from the landmark Illinois Community Technology Fund, which has been designed to ensure that citizens in rural communities and low income areas of the state have access to advanced telecommunications technology.

The fund, which was established by the Illinois Commerce Commission as a condition of the merger of SBC and Ameritech Illinois in 1999, may be used by community organizations to acquire computer equipment, software, Internet access, technical support, program design and other telecommunications services. SBC/Ameritech is required by Commission order to support the fund through payments of \$1 million each year for three years.

During his administration Illinois Governor George H. Ryan has emphasized technology and these grant funds will help to ensure that citizens in low-income, high cost areas of the state are not by-passed by the information super highway.

"I commend Chairman Richard Mathias and the ICC on their foresight on the merger requirement," Governor Ryan said. "This is a good example of how governments, businesses and community groups can work together."

ICC Chairman Mathias added, "Access to advanced telecommunications services is absolutely key to the development of our local communities, our schools and all people of this state.

"These grants will allow local community groups, those closest to the people, to buy equipment, set up programs and meet the technology needs. We can't afford to let any area of the state fall behind on access to this valuable resource," he said.

Grant requests were reviewed and considered by the Illinois Community Technology Fund Board. The Fund is administered by a not for profit corporation comprised of representatives of the Governor's Office of Technology, the Illinois Commerce Commission, American Association of Retired People (AARP), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Rural Partners, Illinois Assistive Technology Project, Community Workshop on Economic Development, Policy Research and Action Group, Illinois Small Business Utility Advocate, Citizens Utility Board and Ameritech.

A photo accompanying this release includes representatives of The Charles A. Hayes Family Investment Center, a grant recipient. They are, from left to right, Emmett Hines, Trushar Desai and CEO Zenobia Johnson with Illinois Commerce Commission Chairman Richard Mathias, (holding check) and Commissioners Ruth K. Kretschmer and Terry Harvill. Additional information on the grant recipients is available on the website [http:// www. ictf.org](http://www.ictf.org).

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